

messengers as well. New technologies will enable stock clerks and order fillers to handle more stock, resulting in slower-than-average employment growth. Employment of shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks and of cargo and freight agents also will grow more slowly than average due to the increasing use of automation that enables these workers to handle materials and shipments more efficiently and more accurately.

Employment of dispatchers; production, planning, and expediting clerks; and weighers, measurers, checkers, and samplers is projected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through 2010. Population growth, in addition to the expanded role of dispatchers stemming from advances in telecommunications, should boost employment levels. Employment of production, planning, and expediting clerks should benefit from more emphasis on efficiency in the production process, while the growing need for accurate inventory records spurs employment of weighers, measurers, checkers, and samplers.

Earnings

Earnings of material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing occupations vary somewhat by occupation and industry. The range of median hourly earnings in 2000 are shown in the following tabulation:

Production, planning, and expediting clerks	\$14.71
Cargo and freight agents	13.73
Dispatchers	13.66
Meter readers, utilities	13.32
Weighers, measurers, checkers, and samplers, recordkeeping	11.36
Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks	10.52
Couriers and messengers	8.96
Stock clerks and order fillers	8.75
All other material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing workers	11.66

Workers in material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing occupations usually receive the same benefits as most other workers. If uniforms are required, employers usually provide either the uniforms or an allowance to purchase them.

More information on cargo and freight agents; couriers and messengers; dispatchers; meter readers, utilities; production, planning, and expediting clerks; shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks; stock clerks and order fillers; and weighers, measurers, checkers, and samplers is available in statements on these occupations that follow this introduction.

Cargo and Freight Agents

(O*NET 43-5011.00)

Nature of the Work

Cargo and freight agents arrange for and track incoming and outgoing cargo and freight shipments in airline, train, or trucking terminals or on shipping docks. They expedite movement of shipments by determining the route that shipments are to take and preparing all necessary shipping documents. The agents take orders from customers and arrange for pickup of freight or cargo for delivery to loading platforms. They may keep records of the properties of the cargo, such as amount, type, weight, and dimensions. They keep a tally of missing items, record conditions of damaged items, and document any excess supplies.

Cargo and freight agents arrange cargo according to its destination. They also determine the shipping rates and other charges that can sometimes apply to the freight. For imported or exported freight,



Cargo and freight agents keep records of the type, weight, and dimensions of cargo shipped.

they verify that the proper customs paperwork is in order. They often track shipments using electronic data, such as bar codes, and answer customer inquiries on the status of their shipments.

Employment

Cargo and freight agents held about 60,000 jobs in 2000. Most jobs were in transportation. About 35 percent of cargo and freight agents worked in transportation services, 23 percent worked for air carriers, and 10 percent worked for local and long distance trucking establishments. Department stores employed 12 percent, while personnel supply services employed 3 percent.

Job Outlook

Employment of cargo and freight agents is expected to grow more slowly than the average for all occupations through 2010. Although cargo traffic is expected to grow faster than it has in the past, employment of cargo and freight agents will not grow as rapidly because of technological advances. For example, the increasing use of bar codes on cargo and freight allows agents and customers to track these shipments quickly over the Internet, rather than manually tracking their location. In addition, customs and insurance paperwork now can be completed over the Internet by customers, reducing the need for cargo and freight agents.

Despite these advances in technology that dampen job growth among cargo and freight agents, job openings will continue to arise due to increases in buying over the Internet, which will result in more

shipments, and the importance of same-day delivery, which expands the role of agents. In addition, many job openings will be created to replace cargo and freight agents who leave the occupation.

Related Occupations

Cargo and freight agents plan and coordinate cargo shipments using airlines, trains, and trucks. They also arrange freight pickup with customers. Others who do similar work are couriers and messengers; shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks; weighers, measurers, checkers, and samplers; truckdrivers and driver/sales workers; and Postal Service workers.

Sources of Additional Information

Information about job opportunities may be obtained from local employers and local offices of the State employment service.

(See introduction to the section on material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing occupations for information on working conditions, training requirements, and earnings.)

Couriers and Messengers

(O*NET 43-5021.00)

Nature of the Work

Couriers and messengers move and distribute information, documents, and small packages for businesses, institutions, and government agencies. They pick up and deliver letters, important business documents, or packages that need to be sent or received quickly within a local area. Trucks and vans are used for larger deliveries, such as legal caseloads and conference materials. By sending an item by courier or messenger, the sender ensures that it reaches its destination the same day or even within the hour. Couriers and messengers also deliver items that the sender is unwilling to entrust to other means of delivery, such as important legal or financial documents, passports, airline tickets, or medical samples to be tested.

Couriers and messengers receive their instructions either by reporting to their office in person, by telephone, by two-way radio, or wireless data service. They then pick up the item and carry it to its destination. After each pickup or delivery, they check in with dispatch to receive instructions. Sometimes dispatch will contact them while they are between stops; they may be routed to go past a stop that has very recently called in a delivery. Since most couriers and messengers work on commission, they are carrying more than one package at any given time of the day. Consequently, most couriers and messengers spend much of their time outdoors or in their vehicle. They usually maintain records of deliveries and often obtain signatures from the persons receiving the items.

Most couriers and messengers deliver items within a limited geographic area, such as a city or metropolitan area. Items that need to go longer distances usually are sent by mail or by an overnight delivery service. Some couriers and messengers carry items only for their employer, which typically might be a law firm, bank, or financial institution. Others may act as part of an organization's internal mail system and mainly carry items among an organization's buildings or entirely within one building. Many couriers and messengers work for messenger or courier services; for a fee, they pick up items from anyone and deliver them to specified destinations within a local area. Most are paid on a commission basis.

Couriers and messengers reach their destination by several methods. Many drive vans or cars or ride motorcycles. A few travel by foot, especially in urban areas or when making deliveries nearby. In congested urban areas, messengers often use bicycles to make deliveries. Bicycle messengers usually are employed by messenger or courier services. Although e-mail and fax machines can deliver



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information faster than couriers and messengers can and a great deal of information is available over the Internet, an electronic copy cannot substitute for the original document for many types of business transactions.

Employment

Couriers and messengers together held about 141,000 jobs in 2000. About 9 percent of couriers and messengers worked for law firms, another 10 percent worked for hospitals and medical and dental laboratories, and 29 percent were employed by local and long-distance trucking establishments. Financial institutions, such as commercial banks, savings institutions, and credit unions, employed 10 percent. The rest were employed in a variety of other industries. Technically, many messengers are self-employed independent contractors because they provide their vehicles and, to a certain extent, set their own schedules but, in many respects, they are like employees because they usually work for one company.

Job Outlook

Employment of couriers and messengers is expected to decline through 2010 despite an increasing volume of parcels, business documents, promotional materials, and other written information that must be handled and delivered as the economy expands. Employment of couriers and messengers will continue to be adversely impacted by the more widespread use of electronic information-handling technology. For example, fax machines that allow copies of documents to be immediately sent across town or around the world have become standard office equipment. The transmission of information using e-mail also has become commonplace and will continue to reduce the demand for messengers. Many documents, forms, and application that people used to have delivered by hand are now downloaded from the Internet. However, couriers and messengers still will be needed to transport materials that cannot be sent electronically—such as legal documents, blueprints and other oversized materials, large multipage documents, securities, passports, financial statements, and airline tickets. Also, they still will be required by medical and dental laboratories to pick up and deliver medical samples, specimens, and other materials.

Related Occupations

Messengers and couriers deliver letters, parcels, and other items. They also keep accurate records of their work. Others who do similar work are Postal Service workers; truckdrivers and driver/